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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Contributors: Tim Wyatt | Claire Jackson | Bhavani Shankar | Julie Faber

Eric McGough

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From the Editor's desk

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Esoterica*. Now that Summer is officially over, (I think I must have blinked and missed it) we can look forward to the wonderful scenes of the Autumn splendour gifted to us by our shrubs and trees.

Autumn, being a celestial event, means that it is global. As with the solstices, there is evidence documenting equinox celebrations from all over the world for thousands of years. Stonehenge will be visited by hundreds, if not thousands, of people on Sunday 22nd September celebrating the rising of the sun over the ancient stones.

In this edition, Claire Jackson completes her article about the Theosophical Publishing House with part two of her exploration of the archives at the TSEW headquarters.

In recent decades there has been a marked rise in cremations. The article, *Up in Smoke* gives an insight into theosophical involvement in establishing this practice in the western world.

Tim Wyatt's excellent article, *Suicide by Modernism* on the aggressively rapid advancement of modernism that the world has ever seen, is a bitter pill of home truths that we should all take notice of. Hopefully, humanity will eventually chose a different path. As Tim says – "It's no one's choice but ours."

A long-time question regarding the lines of evolution running through the ages of our planet's history is explored and settled by



Nik

Stonehenge, the prehistoric megalithic structure on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, England, two miles west of Amesbury.

reference to H. P. Blavatsky and her adept teachers in *Are There Parallel Lines of Evolution or a Single Evolutionary Chain?*

Finally, I must congratulate Julie Faber on achieving the seemingly impossible task of summing up the stanzas of *Cosmogenesis* in poetic form.

Whatever your interests and chosen studies in the teachings of theosophy, I hope that you will find plenty to stimulate your thought in this edition. Best wishes to all. ✱.

Julie Cunningham Editor

We are always pleased to receive feedback on the articles and also welcome articles for our consideration.

Please email us at esoterica@theosoc.org.uk.

The deadline for inclusion in the Winter edition is 20th November 2024.

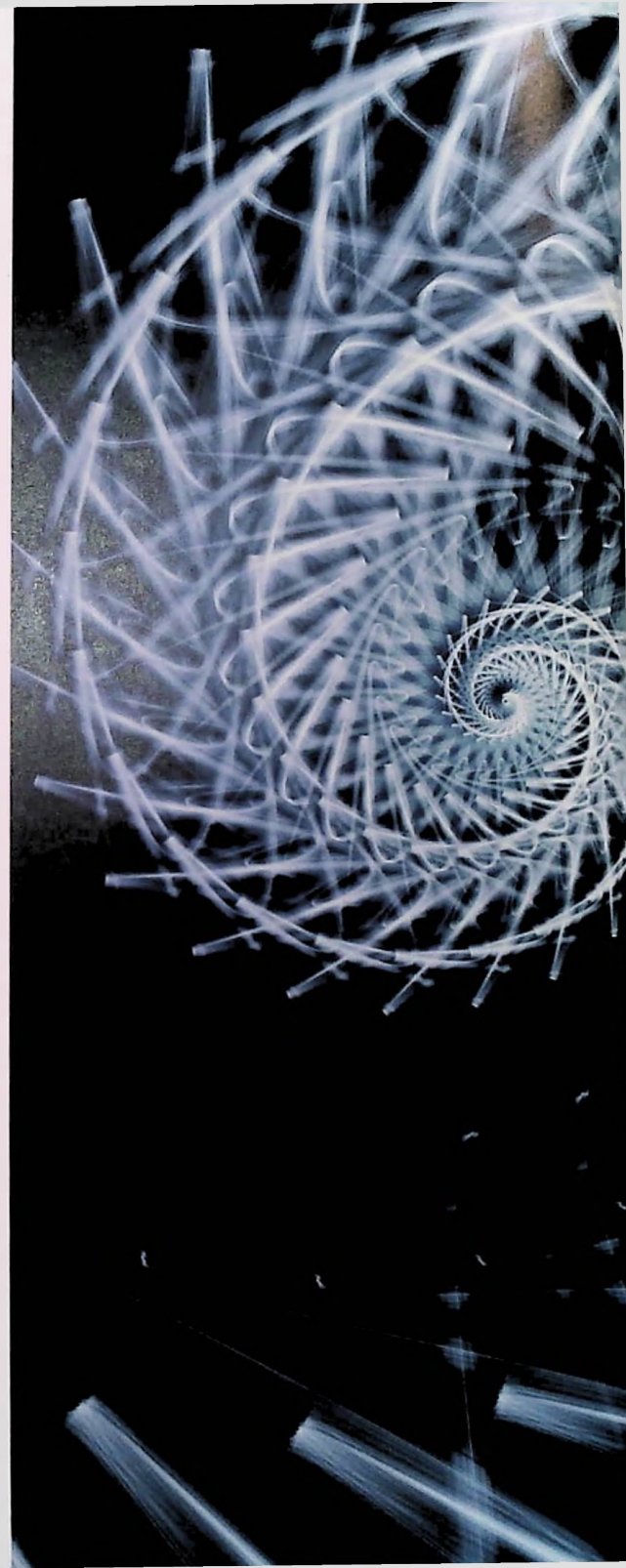
Are There Parallel Lines of Evolution or a Single Evolutionary Chain?

From *BlavatskyTheosophy.com*

It is unfortunate that the majority of Theosophists today seem to think that Theosophy teaches that the angels – as also the elementals – are in a parallel and separate line of evolution from ours, i.e. that they have evolved, and will evolve, along their own lines and that the angelic beings of today have not evolved up through the human kingdom and the elementals of today will not ever pass through the human stage but will eventually evolve into angels through their own distinct “line.”

Theosophists often speak of this teaching in such terms as “parallel lines of evolution,” “the angelic line of evolution,” “the devic line,” “the elemental line of evolution,” etc. This idea can now be found in numerous New Age teachings also, having been copied from Theosophical Society books and literature.

But let us make very clear: this idea is not part of the Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas or Masters of Wisdom who were her Teachers. It is in fact completely



Frank Cone

contradictory and opposite to what genuine Theosophy repeatedly emphasises on this subject.

The “parallel lines of evolution” teaching originates with C. W. Leadbeater of The Theosophical Society, Adyar and was accepted as true by his colleagues and supporters such as Annie Besant and later Alice Bailey, who incorporated it into their own writings. Leadbeater claimed to have discovered it (in the early 20th century, approximately 10-20 years after HPB had passed away) through his self-proclaimed clairvoyant powers and investigations. It was this alleged clairvoyance that eventually led Leadbeater to declare that almost everything HPB had taught had been incorrect in one way or another and that he had been tasked by the Masters to “correct” it on Their behalf. Largely thanks to the internet, many people nowadays are aware that Leadbeater was unfortunately a conscious fraud, liar, and a highly immoral individual. Those who doubt this or wish to learn more of the real facts are invited to read *The Case Against C. W. Leadbeater*.¹

The Leadbeater/Besant/Bailey doctrine of the parallel lines of evolution is just one of around fifty significant differences and contradictions that can be found between Original Theosophy and the more prevalent later version.

Perhaps the worst part of it is that some Theosophists (those who have not read HPB for themselves) sincerely believe that this



Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854-1934) was a member of the Theosophical Society, a Co-Freemason and an author on occult subjects.

the fourth – and therefore the central or pivotal – of the seven kingdoms of Nature, the seven stages through which all monads must inevitably pass. That article illustrates that the three elemental kingdoms can be thought of as a downwards curve, then there is the mineral kingdom at the base line, and an upwards curve which completes the arc consists of the vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms. The mineral kingdom is thus “the first really manward stage”.⁹ The mineral “is light itself, crystallised.”¹⁰

We mention the *About The Mineral Monad* article because this particularly important passage is found in it:

“There are seven kingdoms. The first group

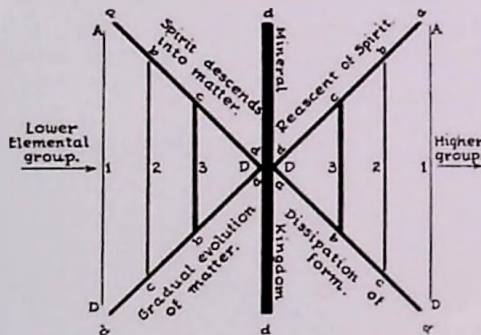
comprises three degrees of elementals, or nascent centres of forces – from the first stage of the differentiation of Mulaprakriti to its third degree – i.e., from full unconsciousness to semi-perception; the second or higher group embraces the kingdoms from vegetable to man; the

mineral kingdom thus forming the central or turning-point in the degrees of the “Monadic Essence” – considered as an Evolving Energy. Three stages in the elemental side; the mineral kingdom; three stages in the objective physical side ... the three stages of organic life, vegetable, animal, human ... – these are the seven links of the evolutionary chain. A descent of spirit into

matter, equivalent to an ascent in physical evolution; a re-ascent from the deepest depths of materiality (the mineral) towards its status quo ante, with a corresponding dissipation of concrete organisms up to Nirvana – the vanishing point of differentiated matter.”

People are of course free and at liberty to choose whichever version of “Theosophy” they prefer. But all students of Theosophy have a right – as well as a responsibility – to know what the Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky and her Adept-Teachers actually says.

“The Diyan-Chohans . . . neither the collective Host (Demiurgos), nor any of the working powers individually, are proper subjects for divine honours or worship. All are entitled to the grateful reverence of Humanity, however, and man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of Ideas, by becoming to the best of his ability a co-worker with nature in the cyclic task.”¹¹



Explanatory diagram from the article *About The Mineral Monad* by H. P. Blavatsky.

“I have also noted your thoughts about the ‘Secret Doctrine.’ Be assured that what she [i.e. HPB] has not annotated from scientific and other works, we have given or suggested to her. Every mistake or erroneous notion, corrected and explained by her from the works of other theosophists was corrected by me, or under my instruction. It is a more valuable work than its predecessor, an epitome of occult truths that make it a source of information and instruction for the earnest student for long years to come.”

“You do not realize that when speaking of, or as from us, she dares not mix up her own personal opinions with those she tells you are ours. None of us would dare do so, for we have

a code that is not to be transgressed."

"This you must tell to all: – With occult matters she has everything to do.... She is our direct agent there is no likelihood of our finding a better one – and your theosophists should be made to understand it Theosophists should learn it. You will understand later the significance of this declaration so keep it in mind. Her fidelity to our work being constant, and her sufferings having come upon her thro' it, neither I nor either of my Brother associates will desert or supplant her. As I once before remarked, ingratitude is not among our vices." ¹² ✱

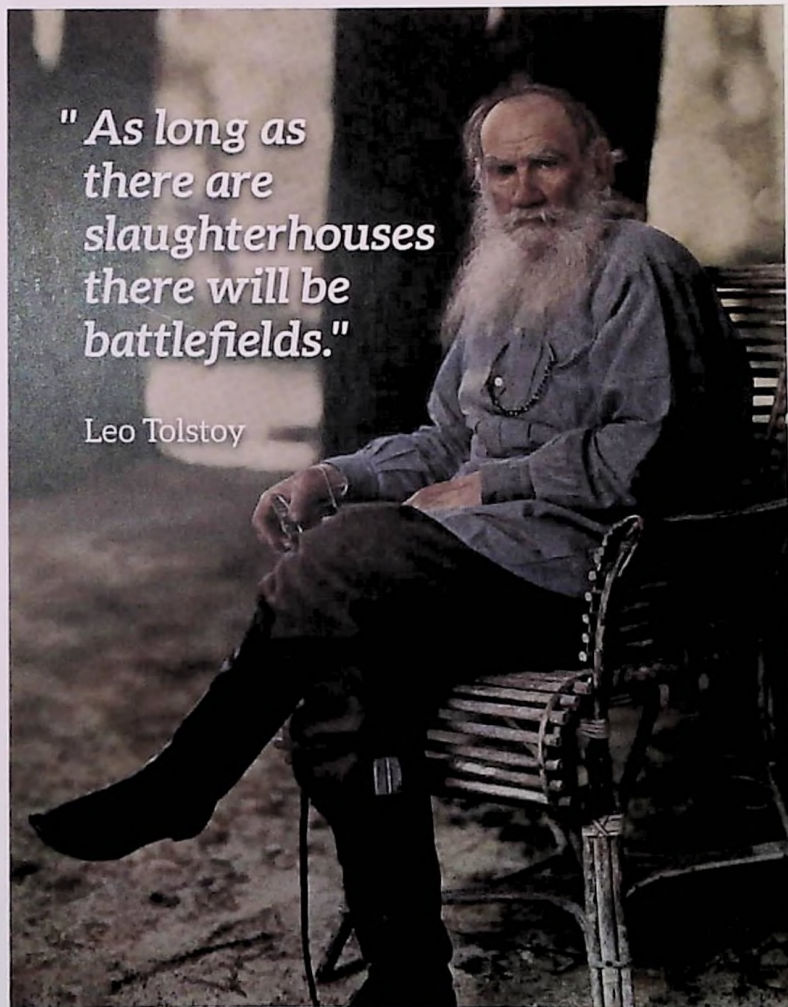
By kind permission of BlavatskyTheosophy.com

Notes

1. The Case Against C. W. Leadbeater - blavatskytheosophy.com <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/the-case-against-c-w-leadbeater/>
2. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 2, p. 322.
3. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 277.
4. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 274- 275, 276.
5. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 221.
6. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 107.
7. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 184.
8. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 2, p. 257.
9. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 176.
10. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 2, p. 169.
11. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 280.
12. The Master K.H., extracts from letters to Col. Olcott.

"As long as
there are
slaughterhouses
there will be
battlefields."

Leo Tolstoy



Suicide by Modernism

By **Tim Wyatt**



As I reach a certain late stage in my life I have a confession to make. I detest virtually all aspects of the modern world. It's not just because I'm getting old and grumpy. And I know that I'm not alone in this loathing.

Those of us in the twilight of our current bodily existence can feel fortunate – or perhaps otherwise – for experiencing the most aggressively rapid advancement the world has ever seen. We've witnessed consecutive decades of greater wealth, longevity and scientific progress than our ancestors ever did. Healthcare, social justice and communications have all witnessed radical transformation. Yes, I'm the first to admit that there have been huge benefits.

But there's another more sinister side to all this. Because in many ways this outward wealth has actually made us poorer.

During the past seven decades the world's population has more than trebled. Wars have continued to proliferate as the Military Industrial Complex lurches ever closer towards bloated maturity.

Our species has never been caught up in such a quick-fire pace of change. And much of this change has been all-encompassing with few if any get-out clauses of any kind. It's been extraordinarily difficult to avoid or opt

out of it. Many people find all this change extremely unsettling. Others have and continue to be deeply damaged by it. This continually accelerating change hasn't only had a dehumanising effect, it's created a sick, material-only world mainly devoid of any notion of soul, spirit, purpose or destiny. This modernism now largely manifests as a disease with its own pathology.

Modernism detests and dismisses what it regards as airy-fairy notions of spirituality, let alone hidden dimensions. It firmly sides with the currently fashionable logical, hard-brained conclusions of materialistic science that the universe is a random accident without plan or purpose. Modernism declares God dead and offers nothing to fill that vacuum other than tawdry and fatuous promises of a brighter future enhanced by transhumanism and other technological tit-bits. Modernism claims to have monopolistic rights on rationality and reason.

The twentieth century declared war on most of its past and unleashed an orgy of hubristic sacrificial iconoclasm desperately seeking to obliterate all which had preceded it – be they buildings, traditions or ideas. Only the new would do. This slaughter and evisceration of our heritage persists and in fact continues to gain pace. The reasons for this are both complex and cyclical. This onslaught of aggressive modernism coincided with the demise and end-times of the Age of Pisces and the relentless rise of that new pervasive world religion – scientific materialism, aka scientism.

This modernism is both a potent symbol and infectious symptom of the machine age

in which we find ourselves increasingly entrapped and enslaved. We can't of course go back to the past – but we can retrieve some of its floating debris.

Certainly, past civilizations often tried with varying degrees of success to erase and eradicate all trace of their forebears or those they'd conquered. The last century – especially the second half of it – abruptly assumed a deep loathing for its history and pedigree to such a degree that it became imperative to destroy as much of this shameful baggage as quickly as possible. There became a sudden and mysterious imperative to consider the past junk and history – as the car mogul Henry Ford bluntly put it – bunk.

These days, thanks in the main to quasi-demonic ideologies of rich elites and the accompanying technologies, we have the means to carry out that process of cleansing ourselves of the past more completely and with ever-increasing efficiency.

None of this needs to be sophisticated or even convincing. Modernism is essentially a blunt tool to dismantle tradition. However tacky, dysfunctional, ugly, useless or absurd, it triumphed as the chosen means to bulldoze the past by first mocking and then killing off



Markus Spiske

most of its achievements. Modernism became the only mantra. Anything else was heresy. Say it often enough and everyone believes it.

Increasingly astringent forms of supposedly enlightened modernism have pervaded humanity's combined mind and percolated through every thought and endeavour. This wholesale denial of the past has perverted many branches of (particularly Western) culture along with social attitudes, politics, architecture, economics and a deep fetish for instantly redundant technology. For decades the consensus has been that modernism should proceed uninterrupted under the glorious banner of 'progress', no

matter how destructive, damaging or disruptive the measures involved prove to be.

So-called material progress has been the tempting morsel dangled alluringly in front of us to make the perma-change of modernism more palatable. It's true to say that most of us are certainly more materially prosperous than our parents

or grandparents – but also far less contented, let alone happy than previous generations. Material wealth is a mean and misleading measure of well-being. Beyond a certain point too much money and owning too much 'stuff' may actually be damaging because these accoutrements overshadow

deeper and more noble virtues and aspirations. Many people recognise the fact that rather than owning their possessions they are in fact owned by them.

Modernism has moulded contemporary thinking into homogeneous group-speak by using Marxist-inspired means to manipulate language, demonising key words and issuing banishing orders on prohibited phrases and ideas. As always dissidents are punished by cancellation, exile or reputational death.

Modernism has jettisoned us into a post-truth era. What was once unassailable is now rather more elastic and flexible in interpretation. Equally, morality is seen as a troublesome old uncle who won't be there to bother us for much longer. Morality is more malleable and nowadays most of us engage in (usually contradictory) forms of moral relativism.

Another sad aspect of pan-modernism is its holy writ that functionality must always take precedence over aesthetics and beauty. It is far better to uproot woodland to make way for eyesore, jerry-built buildings alarmingly crammed together where once the bluebells grew and the sparrows chirped than leave it undisturbed. This isn't the modern way.

Perhaps one of the most visible and indeed damaging effects of modernism can be seen in architecture. America perhaps set the gold standard for perpetually uprooting its albeit recent (post-settlement) history, constantly tearing down buildings and erecting new ones. In contrast, and in the face of great odds, its indigenous peoples have been more successful at preserving their simpler



Dustan Woodhouse

and more harmonious living techniques.

Since the 1950s many cities have engaged in disgraceful acts of municipal vandalism. Rather than restore or replicate buildings, local authorities across the globe chose the angular concrete and steel approach. Terraces of houses where everyone knew their neighbours were upended skywards by 90 degrees into human filing cabinets where no one knew anyone and bored teenagers urinated in the lifts that never worked.

Many of the world's cities have become absurd and grotesque temples to modernism with glass and metal structures protruding from the ground leaving human populations dwarfed by their lengthening shadows. Modern architects hate the buildings of the past – especially those designed on classical lines featuring proportion of even sacred geometry. There's no place for harmony, balance or timeless mathematical truths in this world. Modern architecture appears to be based on dissonance.

In the modern world we are assured that technology can meet all our needs – and even those we haven't yet identified. As something always synonymous with progress technology is the catch-all cure for all our problems (even those it has created). It has all the answers. Technological innovation is always viewed as an improvement even when it isn't. It is weaponised and commercialised without the slightest thought as to the impact it may have on us or the world and all its life-forms and habitats.

Growing numbers suspect that technology is damaging us physically and diminishing us mentally – and turning our spiritual faculties

sclerotic. It is leading us down a one-way cul-de-sac to that ghost town destination called destruction.

Much modern technology is born and nurtured in war zones. Elsewhere it has become a ubiquitous tool for social control, manipulation and mass surveillance. Technologies to improve communication are often achieving precisely the opposite effect – dislocation, isolation and despair. Let's not even discuss the rancid backwaters of social media.

Even the architects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) admit that it poses a bigger threat to humanity than such trifles as pandemics, nuclear war or asteroid impacts. More immediately, according to an august body like the International Monetary Fund AI will affect between 40 and 60 per cent of all jobs and increase already gaping inequalities. This is modernism and unless we want to be branded as Luddites or heretics we must accept it.

In the past technologies lasted centuries or even millennia, slowly evolving over time. Now it is only months, weeks or even days before it is obsolescent. And sometimes this is before the device has even left the Chinese factory where it's made.

Modernism is digitising currencies and gradually killing off cash for reasons which many believe are deeply sinister. Some



Igor Omilayev

humans have always had an almost limitless capacity for greed, exploitation and profit at any cost. A dominating modernist agenda divested of ethics hugely accelerates this capacity and (because of flexible morality) elevates money-making into a sacred art-form to be cherished and emulated.

Finally, let me backtrack slightly. Modernism isn't a bad thing by definition. After all – as esotericists are very well aware – the purpose of everything is to evolve and nothing remains the same for the tiniest fraction of time. It's the way and the pace with which modernism has been

implemented in our current era which

seems to almost defy natural evolutionary trends by force-feeding us a future fewer and fewer of us seem to want.

Surprisingly, despite the ravages it has wrought, modernism is provoking a kick-back (and yet it's always had its detractors).

Although comparatively few

people embrace timeless values let alone cosmic truths anymore, it would appear that

increasing numbers of disillusioned, alienated and spiritually starving people are keenly searching for alternatives along with other explanations and new ways of living.

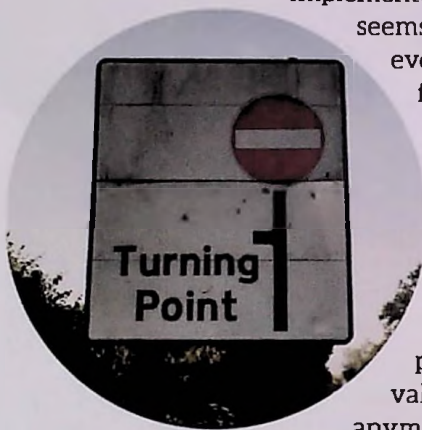
The current mode of modernism – physical and mental – will one day itself be demolished in just the same way it toppled structures it regarded as outdated. The question then remains. Will whatever replaces it be more attuned to and in

harmony with the natural world? Will the technologies, consciousness, art and science of the future put human beings centre stage? It's no one's choice but ours. ✱



Tim Wyatt is an esoteric author, film-maker, lecturer and publisher based in West Yorkshire, England. His books and music are available from www.firewheelbooks.co.uk His latest film 'The Myth Of Death' is available on

YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3LibXrt>



Roger Bradshaw

**"Those that
cannot endure
the light of reason
and knowledge
are more comfortable
living in the
darkness of
superstition.**

**Light reveals,
darkness conceals."**

Anon



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People, Places and Publishing A Topographical History of the TPH, London: Part 2

By **Claire Jackson**

In part one of this *History of the Theosophical Publishing House* we walked over eleven miles and visited seven locations covering the first 43 years of the Theosophical Publishing House (known as TPH), taking us up to 1920. You will be pleased to hear that in this second part, covering the next 100 years, we are traveling less than half the distance, confining ourselves to five terrace buildings originally laid out in the late 18th and early 19th

Century in the Fitzrovia, Bloomsbury and Marylebone areas of central London (Fig. 1).

You may remember we paused our story at 20 St Martin's Street, near the National Gallery, with the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH) in the capable hands of Miss Parley and on 6th August 1921 Annie Besant had gifted the company to the General Secretaries of the Theosophical Society in England:

"The Chairman informed the Committee that the Theosophical Publishing House in this country had been handed over as a free gift by Mrs Besant and formed into a company limited by guarantee with the general secretaries for England, Scotland and Wales, and for Ireland as the sole members and Directors."

Theosophical Publishing House London Incorporated, 1921-1929

Although the company was supposedly handed over gratis, TPH London promised to pay off in installments to Annie Besant a 40,000 rand debt owed to her. However, there were difficulties almost immediately – the Theosophical Publishing House in Adyar wrote to London in November 1921 that Mrs Besant had had to pay the London printers remittance from her own account and that no money had been sent to India by Miss Parley to cover sales and royalties since Spring 1920 – “naturally TPH London cannot pay on receipt but if you will go into the account carefully you will find that their indebtedness to us has recently been considerable”.

On the London side there are complaints

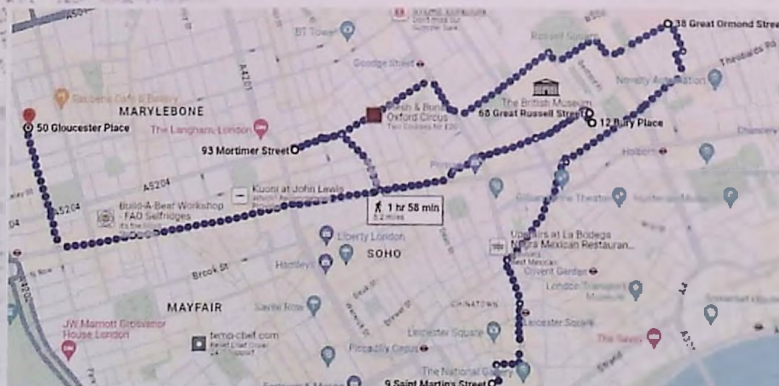


Figure 1: Route of locations of the Theosophical Publishing House, 1921-2021. (Google Maps).

that they have been sent a book by J I Wedgwood which is not of popular interest and too expensive to sell. Also that TPH Adyar did not answer letters or deal adequately with accounts. Krishnamurti acts as intermediary and meets Kunz, Manager of TPH, Adyar: "Krishnaji called on me yesterday regarding the matters you commissioned him to discuss... as I have already written to Miss Parley the difficulties in putting this place right have been unbelievably numerous. We are still very short handed and our help is a curious mixture of considerable competence and absolute incompetence, both the paid and the honorary."

Six months later, David Graham Pole, General Secretary, tells Mr Kunz that he is unable to send the £300 requested because the American Theosophical Publishing House, then based at Krotona, owes them £400 and is proposing to write this sum off.

In 1923, a new name appears witnessing Miss Parley's author contracts - that of L Severs, of whom more later. Miss Parley holds a book meeting with ten General Secretaries of European Theosophical Societies to discuss a proposed European TPH although some agree that income should go to a common purse: "they do not say whether they would be prepared to share a loss! [sic] Others believe a European TPH would be useful as they might get their printing cheaper: assuming it would have its own printing presses. They have, perhaps, not visualized the amount of capital which would be necessary".

Miss Parley thinks that language and regional tastes for particular aspects of theosophy as well as finance would make such a proposal impossible and she suggests a

loose bureau, but this idea fizzles out.

By 1924 a report to the General Secretaries found that, "The TPH was without capital, nearly all standard books were out of print and it was losing money yearly... an impossible situation the T.P.H. either ceased to exist or was reconstituted".

The Bookseller announced "The Theosophical Publishing House has changed its address to 38 Great Ormond Street, where the general publishing business of the house will be conducted including sales to the trade. The services of Mr S L Bensusan [editor of the Theosophical Review 1925-1927] have been secured as literary advisor while Mr B N Langdon-Davies has succeeded Miss Parley as Manager".

The Theosophical Bookshop at Great Portland Street would continue to sell occult books.

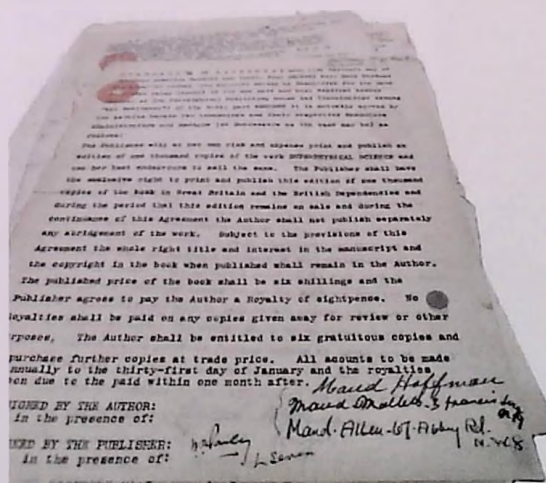


Figure 2: Leslie Severs' counter signature on 1923 Author Contract with Miss Hoffman (on behalf of A P Sinnett). (TSE Archives).

Mr and Mrs Severs "in the present employ of the Theosophical Publishing House" and Mr Kearns, the warehouseman, were kept on but other staff were informed that their services would not be required after 28 February 1925. Minutes of the Board noted "that the last few years have been very difficult in the publishing business" and that the current changes did not reflect on Miss Parley, who had been manager since 1917.

Bernard Noel Langdon-Davies, a left wing pacifist who was not a member of the Theosophical Society but sympathetic to its aims, agreed to run the company in conjunction with his other publishing interests. He had, since 1920, been manager of The Labour Publishing Company (a subsidiary of the Labour Party's research

department), publishing cheap editions of books of Labour interest. Langdon-Davies also had an imprint with a friend, George Cole Noel Davies, which had an Ormond Poetry series that issued books on diverse subjects including nudism, and the history of torture. By a happy coincidence, in 1926, Noel Davies published a book on German spas by the TPH "literary advisor," Samuel Bensusan.

The joint offices at 38 Great Ormond Street, a Georgian terrace building on land owned by Rugby School, had a radical past. Between March and August 1914 it was known as

the 'Rebel Art Centre', where Wyndham Lewis launched his *Blast* magazine with its Vorticist Manifesto. The Centre's classes and talks attracted several like-minded artists inspired by Cubism and

Futurism, including Edward Wadsworth and the French sculptor, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska.

Langdon-Davies undertook to keep the TPH business separate from his other ventures. Books published by him for TPH included lectures by Annie Besant as well as *Be Ye Perfect* by Geoffrey Hodson (Fig. 4) and *Etheric Double* by A E Powell.

These were turbulent times for the Theosophical Society, with the high profile declaration of Krishnamurti as World Teacher, controversies still rumbling about the private lives of C W Leadbeater and J I Wedgwood and breakaway groups like the eponymous Blavatsky Association championing a 'back to H P Blavatsky' movement.

The financial affairs of the Theosophical Publishing House were not improving under Langdon-Davies who was still struggling to get monies from Adyar and had asked that the charge for The Theosophist subscription



Figure 4: Cover of *Be Ye Perfect* by Geoffrey Hodson. (TSE Archives).

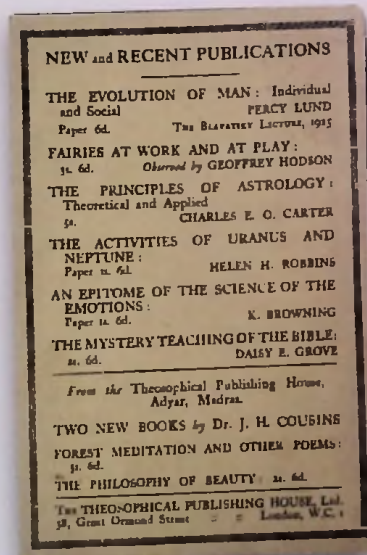


Figure 3: Advert for 38 Great Ormond Street. (TSE Archives).

was amended, as a loss was being made on every copy sold. It didn't help that the copyright of H P Blavatsky's works had been acquired by Adyar. Charles Carter was asked to loan TPH £100 to enable *Principles of Astrology* to be published. A *Theosophical Glossary* was a rare commissioned work, whose author, Theodore Besterman, was paid £25 on delivery of the book and £25 on publication.

When Adyar enquired in 1927 why royalties on Annie Besant's *Universal Textbook on Religion* were so reduced, they were told that the sum they received covered two years of sales during which only 32 copies had been sold; the previous, larger remittance had been for five years as it was impractical to send sums so small each year.

The Labour Publishing Company was suffering from similar problems - 'lack of finance, distribution, inadequate coverage by the press and infighting'. After just three years, in June 1928, notice was given of the withdrawal of TPH from its partnership. Within a few months both the Labour Publishing Company and The Theosophical Publishing House went into receivership. The failure of these ventures did not deter Langdon-Davies who went on to publish a handbook, *The Practice of Bookselling*, in 1951 (Fig. 5).

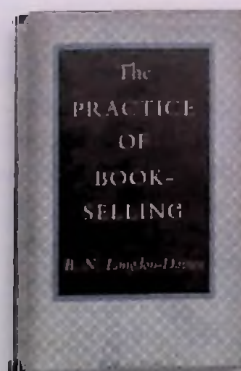


Figure 5: *The Practice of Bookselling*. (TSE Archives).

The Theosophical Bookshop, 43 Great Portland Street, 1920-1929

The Great Ormond Street offices of the Labour Publishing Company and TPH are vacated, but before we go forward with our story let us take a walk just over a mile to the Theosophical Bookshop which had, since 1920, been based in Fitzrovia at 43 Great Portland Street (Fig. 6), the side entrance to Mortimer Hall.

Between 1750 and 1850, 43 Great Portland Street had housed a china showroom owned by James Huson and his descendants. The next owner took the shell of the warehouse and in 1854 created a synagogue for the members of the Great Synagogue of Duke's Place, Aldgate, who had migrated to the more affluent West End. The interior, oriented north-south, was galleried on three sides and had seating for 356. There was 'a large dome, rising from four Corinthian columns, with barrel ceilings'. In 1870 the synagogue moved to its current premises at 133-141 Great Portland Street. The synagogue space was subsequently adapted as a lecture theatre.

The London Galvanic Hospital opened at 93 Mortimer Street (Fig. 7) in 1861. Using methods pioneered by Harry Lobb, an inventor of 'electric garments for medical purposes', the hospital offered treatment to 'helpless,



Figures 6 & 7: Entrances of 43 Great Portland Street (top); and (above) 93 Mortimer Street.



Figure 8: The interior of Mortimer Hall from an article in *The Building News* 1912. (TSE Archives).

abandoned and incurable cases', principally those with nervous disorders. Regarded with suspicion by the medical establishment, it closed in 1869. The building was then the headquarters of the German Athenaeum (Deutscher Verein für Kunst und Wissenschaft), a club for German artists and musicians.

Harry Tatton Haig Sykes, a successful ladies outfitters and corsetières, based in Regent Street and Great Castle Street, had both 43 Great Portland Street and 93 Mortimer Street rebuilt for him by the architects William and Edward Hunt as one building (**Fig. 8**) with two entrances. Harry St John Joyner ran the buildings as the *Arts Centre* between 1913 and 1914 and it was hired by both the

Theosophical Society and the London Spiritual Alliance as an additional venue for the former's Annual Conventions.

In 1918 Mary Dodge purchased the lease of what was now known as Mortimer Hall for the Theosophical Society to use for public meetings with the 43 Great Portland Street entrance being the Theosophical Bookshop. The Annual Convention is held here until 1928, sometimes as an adjunct venue to the larger Queens Hall around the corner.

Mary Melissa Hoadley Dodge (1861-1934) was an invalid American heiress whose father made his fortune mining copper. Through her close friendships with theosophists Emily Lutyens and Constance de La Warr she funded many theosophical causes – not only Mortimer Hall, but also the theosophical propaganda section (£2,000 a year), the school at Letchworth, and she provided a stipend to Krishnamurti and his brother. She cut back on her spending in her later years and moved to Sussex. Her relationship with the Theosophical Society ended with some acrimony in 1929 when the Society sold the Mortimer Hall lease for £31,000 (and the lease of Lancaster Gate which was being used as the headquarters) and used the monies to purchase 50 Gloucester Place in 1934.

68 Great Russell Street, 1929-1986

Back to the Theosophical Publishing House (London) Limited which is in the process of being wound up. The liquidators report in 1930 that the creditors claim they are owed £13, 424. Annie Besant buys the stock of the bookshop "to save the copyright", and puts

her son, Digby, in control.

David Graham Pole, a solicitor who is also General Secretary of the Theosophical Society negotiates to purchase a lease for 'a theosophical publishing shop' at 68 Great Russell Street, one of a terrace of houses built by John Nash in 1777 and opposite the British Museum which housed the British Library in its great rotunda.

During much of the 19th century 68 Great Russell Street was the premises of circulating libraries, firstly Norton's, then Kimpton's. By the eve of the First World War the German publishers Herder had a London branch there. It was briefly, in 1925, the first gallery of the Ben Uri Jewish Art Society but by 1929, when the lease was being agreed with Digby Besant, it was being let, the agents claim, "on practically the same terms" as the previous tenant, Mr Clayton, who was an importer of fancy goods. The Theosophical Bookshop is to remain in Great Russell Street for over 50 years (Fig.9).

A new publishing company was registered on 24 January 1930 as 'Theosophical Publishing House London' but had to be re-registered in June to include the missing 'The'.

Leslie Severs, who as you will remember, had first appeared in the TPH archives witnessing author contracts for Winifred Paley in 1923, manages the business on a day to day basis together with his wife, Lottie. When Annie Besant dies in 1933, leaving the business formally to Digby, Leslie confirms that profits from October 1929 to June 1933 totalled £534, with £158 income tax owing.

An agreement had been made with Adyar in 1938 to buy each other's stock at a 40%

discount. As humidity in India meant that they were unable to keep their paper sheets in good condition they sent these to be stored at the TPH London's binder's warehouses to be bound up as and when orders permitted. At the start of the war Adyar cut the discount to 33% and after a 1941 shipment of 50 sets of *The Secret Doctrine* from India were lost at sea Digby Besant wrote "we feel Adyar were negligent in not dealing with the matter of war risk insurance more thoroughly, we being careful to protect Adyar against loss on shipments to them".

Unfortunately much of the London stock was lost in a conflagration during the war.

Digby Besant and Leslie Severs go into partnership in 1945 with Digby selling his half share in 1947 in installments so that by 1949 Leslie Severs is the sole Director. They also have a very small second imprint called the Philosophical Publishing House (Fig. 10).



Figure 9: Exterior of 68 Great Russell Street. (TSE Archives).



Figure 10: Letter heading showing The Theosophical Publishing House owned by Besant and Severs, 1945. (TSE Archives).

With the exit of Digby Besant in 1949 yet another new company is formed – The

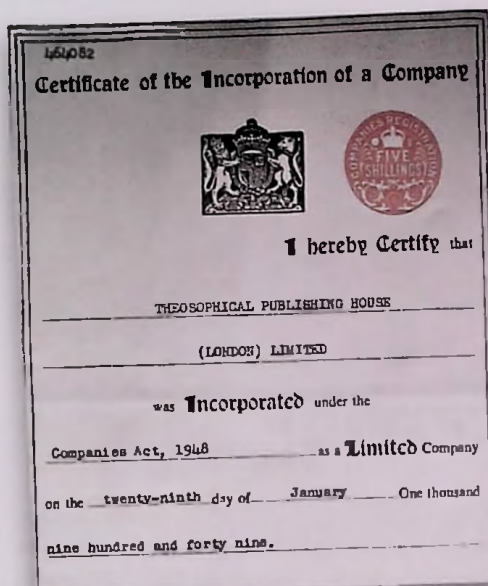


Figure 11: Certificate of incorporation of Theosophical Publishing House (London) Limited, 1949. (TSE Archives).

The ETT was immediately asked to loan the company up to £1,000 as working capital and although Digby Besant offered £200 to reprint Edward Gardner's *Fairies*, this was not taken up as it was hoped that it would make a profit.

Leslie Severs manages the company with very little capital and affairs were conducted on a hand-to-mouth basis, with authors still having to pay upfront, in the hope that their costs would be recouped through sales. On 27 June 1957 a Michael Maxwell attended a Directors meeting and expressed his willingness to learn the TPH business and to work with Mr Severs for six months before

taking over as manager. On his retirement Leslie gave up his majority shareholding to the ETT but Lottie gave him her single share which he held until 1969, enabling him to attend Board meetings.

The Severs move to Sussex, ending over 50 years service to TPH, and in 1981 both die within months of each other, Lottie aged 101 and Leslie ten years younger. Leslie was born in Yorkshire and Lottie in Wales but they had met and married in 1916 in Vancouver where she was working as a stenographer and Leslie as a clerk. On returning to England in 1917 they transferred their membership to the Theosophical Society in England (Fig. 12).

Both in the Government unofficial census of 1939 and on the Memorandum of Association of the Theosophical Publishing House (London) in 1949, they both describe their occupations as 'publisher', showing that they considered the TPH a joint endeavour. Both of them attended meetings of the shareholders until Leslie retired, even though Lottie had stopped working in the shop in 1943. She had been replaced as Assistant Manager by Elsie Ashton. Elsie described Leslie as courteous, dedicated and humble with the constant support of his wife.

81

Date of Diploma	NAME	SPONSORS
Transferred from University 10 10 17	Severs Leslie	—
to	Severs Mrs L.	—

Figure 12: Membership Register of Theosophical Society of England. (TSE Archives).

New beginnings and relationships, 1958-1978

Michael Maxwell, although manager, is not a shareholder – he attends Board meetings by invitation. How he found the business is not known but on one of his first appearances at the Board of Directors on September 1958 the new manager requests the Board agree replacement flooring, a typewriter, a heater for the office, a new catalogue to be printed, the creation of a hanging sign for the door and a glass case in which the likeness of the lecturers at the National Headquarters can be displayed. The landlords reject the glass case and ask for liability insurance for the hanging sign.

At the same meeting, a request from *Theosophical Press* in the USA, now based at Wheaton, that any orders for Vol VII of *HP Blavatsky Collected Writings* (Fig. 13) should be sent to them, is rejected and it is resolved only to pass on orders which come from the USA. Fortunately, it is also reported that Miss A A Hopkinson had left one fifth of her estate to TPH, amounting to £1,600. It is decided to use £1,000 reprinting *The Secret Doctrine*, £200 to repay Leslie Severs outstanding sums, £200 for working capital and £200 for office equipment. After considering the costs, and under pressure from Adyar (including a meeting with the President to discuss the proposal), the Board reluctantly agree not to publish a new edition of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1958 after all.

During the 1966 Theosophical World Congress in Salzburg, the first of a series of meetings between the Theosophical

publishing houses based in Adyar (India), Wheaton (USA) and London is held to define their trading areas and who should be agent of whom. The American *Theosophical Press* had been receiving many of its books from Adyar and London but shortly after the Salzburg meeting it is given a substantial sum by a Mr Kern, enabling it to expand and internationalize its publishing operations and start a paperback imprint, *Quest Books*.

The Theosophical Publishing House London changes its name to The Theosophical Publishing House Limited in 1970. With the advent of the UK entry into the European Market in 1973 Michael Maxwell explores publishing and reprinting books in translation, mostly for the European market.

At the International Publishing Conference, held in 1978 under the Chairmanship of Joy Mills, it is agreed that London would be able to distribute books from Wheaton and Adyar only within the UK, but that India and America could sell directly to Europe. Mills suggests that Wheaton could consider a change in its existing contract in exchange, to enable London to sell directly in the USA. Mr Pederson replied, "TPH Committee Wheaton would have to decide this, but personally I would be all against it".

Michael Maxwell takes a TPH stall to annual conventions and summer schools and eventually arranges for a British reprint of *The Secret Doctrine*. Maxwell also publishes some Theosophical

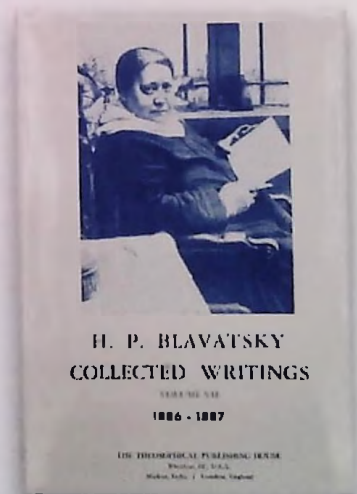


Figure 13: Cover of *HP Blavatsky Collected Writings* Vol VII 1886-1887.

Research Centre investigations (for which it provides funding) and the annual Blavatsky lectures. He builds relationships with authors and reprints some classic works first published in the 1920s and 1930s. Geoffrey Hodson, who has moved to New Zealand, asks Maxwell to send him books of *Daily Telegraph* crosswords which he is missing on his travels. Michael Maxwell stays in post for 20 years until his death in 1978.



Figures 14 & 15: Beverley Blower at 68 Great Russell Street (top); and (above) with post bags c. 1971. (TSE Archives).

Move to 12 Bury Place, 1986-1992

Beverley Blower (Figs. 14 & 15), who succeeds Michael Maxwell, undertakes a review of the business with Diana Burfield, and there are discussions as to whether to purchase Great Russell Street from the landlords. In 1984, with the lease due to expire in two years, the landlords, Bloomsbury Square Estate, give notice to TPH to quit. On further investigation, it is discovered that the building has actually been sold to the Spencer Group. Negotiations are opened with the new owners and by December 1985 it is agreed to move just around the corner to 12 Bury Place (Fig. 16), part of the new owners' development of a space behind Great Russell Street and Bury Place, which is called Pied Bull Court. TPH was provided with a premises with bookshop fittings installed, adjacent to an antiquarian



Figure 16: 12 Bury Place, as it exists today.

bookshop (presently the *London Review Bookshop*), in return for its legal fees being paid and compensation from the Spencer Group, totalling £5,202.

Beverley Blower and the Directors attended a demonstration of microcomputers for stock control. The cost was quoted at £4,340 for the equipment, plus £30 for a manual and £150 for staff training. It was resolved to order the equipment for delivery on 17 February 1986.

In 1988 the shop is renamed *The Quest Bookshop* (Fig. 17) and is under the management of

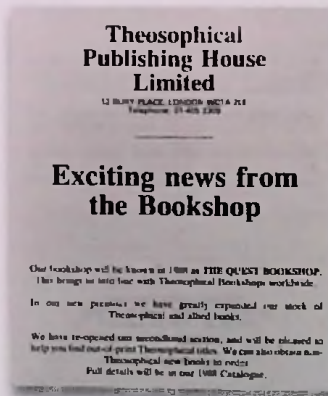


Figure 17: Announcement in 1988 of the name change to *The Quest Bookshop*. (TSE Archives).

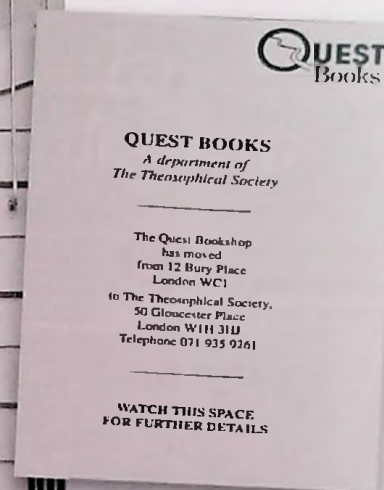
Leslie Price. Loans taken out from the ETT to fund the company over the years have never been repaid and the accountants are worried about the viability of the company without an additional injection of cash.

The final years – 50 Gloucester Place

Despite the valiant efforts of the next manager, Michael Rainger, at the helm between 1989 and 1992, the Board conclude they cannot afford to keep a separate shop and in 1992 *Theosophical Publishing House Limited* goes into liquidation. Most of the stock is moved to 50 Gloucester Place (Figs. 18, 19 & 20), the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in England, although some is temporarily stored in caravans on the Tekels Park Estate.

Laid out in 1810, Gloucester Place was named after George III's brother, William Duke of Gloucester. Number 12 (later renumbered as 50) was variously the London home of the Earl of Cathcart, former ambassador to St Petersburg; Lady Severstre; William Thompson MP; and, from the 1850s, the Argentinian Embassy until it was purchased by the Theosophical Society in 1934.

A new company, *Theosophical Books Limited*, is formed in 1992 and as it is clear that publishing books is not profitable the bookshop continues appealing for second-hand books to sell, building up a large stock, including those from closed Lodges. Publishing new books becomes a small part of the business although the shop is now run part-time by the librarian, and still publishes some journals, the annual Blavatsky lecture and sells some books from Wheaton and Adyar.



Figures 18 & 19: The main entrance to 50 Gloucester Place (above left); and (above right) a notice of the move of premises. (TSE Archives).

It is not enough though – *Theosophical Books Limited* goes into administration in 1998 and, with rare exceptions, publishing ceases after 100 years, although a shell company, *Theosophical Publishing House Limited*, is created in 1999 to provide a vehicle for future publishing and also to protect the name. For those of you keeping count since we started with the Theosophical Publishing Company in 1887, this is the eleventh publishing company in TPH's



Figure 20: Bookshop in the Egyptian Room at Gloucester Place. (TSE Archives).

Up in Smoke: Theosophy and the Revival of Cremation

From Quest magazine



Theosophy is generally acknowledged as the grandparent of the New Age movement. H. P. Blavatsky's potent blend of Eastern and Western mysticism was a formative influence on figures as diverse as the Austrian esotericist Rudolf Steiner; George Adamski, the first of the alleged UFO contactees; and L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology. Less well known is the small but significant role Theosophy played in the modern revival of cremation.

The year was 1876. The Theosophical Society was newly born, and HPB was hard at work on her magnum opus *Isis Unveiled*. Her loyal sidekick, Colonel Henry Olcott, was equally hard at work on more practical

matters. In addition to taking care of HPB's daily needs, the colonel was a tireless proselytizer for the new faith. He organized committees, addressed public meetings, composed pamphlets, and generally did his utmost to promulgate Theosophy in the face of considerable ridicule.

Theosophy was not the colonel's only passion. He was also a member of the New York Cremation Society. Cremation, long considered a barbaric custom fit only for savages, was enjoying a newfound respectability thanks to the efforts of public health campaigners. Cemeteries, declared these radicals, were breeding grounds for germs and toxins. The rotting dead not only released noxious vapors into the atmosphere

but also poisoned local water supplies. Surely it was obvious that the only hygienic way to dispose of a cadaver was to reduce it to sterile ashes?

The New York Cremation Society lacked only two things: a body to cremate and a crematorium in which to cremate it. The first deficiency was solved by the timely arrival of an impoverished Bavarian aristocrat named Baron Joseph Henry Louis Charles De Palm. De Palm entered New York carrying only a trunk and a letter of introduction to Colonel Olcott. The colonel was so impressed by the baron's *"engaging manners"* that he appointed him to the ruling council of the Theosophical Society. Sadly, the elderly baron's health was failing fast. He died in May 1876, leaving all his worldly goods to Olcott. His final request was that his body should be disposed of *"in a fashion that would illustrate the Eastern notions of death and immortality."* In short, the baron wished to be cremated.

"Here, at last, was the chance of having a body to burn," enthused the colonel in his memoirs, *Old Diary Leaves*. Here too was a chance to show the world how the Theosophical Society honored its dead. The colonel and HPB set to work devising an elaborate funeral ceremony to be held in New York's Masonic Temple. After the ceremony, Baron De Palm's body was to be handed over to the New York Cremation Society, which would organize the actual incineration.

The press greeted the announcement of the first Theosophical funeral service with ghoulish delight. The *New York World* printed a lengthy lampoon about it,

predicting that Colonel Olcott would officiate dressed as an Egyptian priest while attended by a retinue of slaves bearing cider and asparagus. The colonel – who rarely bore a grudge – thought it *"one of the wittiest burlesques"* he had ever read. The New York Cremation Society, however, was not amused. They sent Olcott a curt note lamenting that *"they would have to give up the cremation because of the great noise that the papers had made about the funeral and their attacks upon the Theosophical Society."*

The colonel was outraged that *"these respectable moral cowards dared not face the ridicule and animosity which had been excited against us innovators."* Moreover, he now had a decaying cadaver on his hands and no way to dispose of it. The ceremony, of course, would go ahead as planned. After all, the Theosophical Society had already issued 2,000 tickets to an expectant public eager to attend. But what of the cremation? The colonel considered burning the corpse in the open air, but the civic authorities made it plain they would not tolerate such an outrage. In despair, he hastily embalmed the body using potter's clay and carbolic acid. Now that the baron had been put on ice, so to speak, the problem of his disposal was no longer quite so urgent.



Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) was an American military officer, journalist, lawyer, Freemason and the co-founder and first president of the Theosophical Society.



Baron Joseph Henry Louis Charles De Palm (1809-1876).



The second Masonic Hall of New York (1875-1911).

On the day of the ceremony, the Masonic Hall was packed to the rafters with a boisterous crowd, who appeared to the colonel to be "in a dangerous mood." Outside, a line of policemen struggled to control the tide of people trying to force their way into the building.

"It was easy to see that the multitude had come to gratify its curiosity, certainly not to evince either respect for the dead or sympathy with the Theosophical Society," wrote the colonel.

"It was just in that uncertain

mood when the least unexpected and sensational incident might transform it into the wild beast that an excited crowd becomes at times."

The "unexpected incident" was not long in coming. The baron's coffin (decorated with mystic symbols by Madame Blavatsky) rested on a Masonic altar surrounded by seven candles representing the seven planets. A small group of Theosophists stood nearby, waving palm leaves to keep evil spirits at bay. The colonel was conducting the ceremony in person, assisted by a Methodist preacher (a relation of one of the Theosophists).

"There is but one first cause, uncreated," he began, launching into the litany Madame Blavatsky had prepared for him. At this, the Methodist leapt out of his seat, gesticulating wildly. "That's a lie!" he shouted dramatically. As one, the audience rose to their feet, eager

to see what would happen next.

"Some of the rougher sort mounted the chairs, and, looking towards the stage, seemed ready to take part in fighting or skirmishing in case such should break out," recalled the colonel. "Stepping quietly forward, I laid my left hand upon the Baron's coffin, faced the audience, stood motionless and said nothing. In an instant there was a dead silence of expectancy; whereupon, slowly raising my right hand, I said very slowly and solemnly: 'We are in the presence of death!' and then waited."

"The psychological effect was very interesting and amusing to me, who have for so many years been a student of crowds. The excitement was quelled like magic, and then in the same voice as before, and without the appearance of even having been interrupted, I finished the sentence of the litany – 'eternal, infinite, unknown.'"

As the troublesome Methodist was led away by the police, Madame Blavatsky, seated among the audience, stood up and pointed accusingly at him. "He's a bigot – that's what he is!" she yelled indignantly. The crowd burst into laughter, and any remaining tension was harmlessly dissipated. The ceremony proceeded without further incident, and even the skeptical press had to acknowledge that the colonel had conducted himself masterfully.

The actual cremation did not take place until six months later. By then, Colonel Olcott had come into his inheritance, which proved far less lucrative than the baron had led him to expect. The press reported that Baron De Palm had bequeathed the colonel two Swiss

castles and 20,000 acres of farmland, as well as shares in numerous gold and silver mines. In fact, he died quite penniless. The first thing the colonel found upon opening the baron's trunk was two of his own shirts, "from which the stitched name-mark had been picked out." The remaining contents comprised a bronze bust, several unpaid bills, some faded letters from "actresses and prima donnas," and various legal documents that proved quite worthless.

To add insult to injury, a rumor somehow got around that Baron De Palm was the true author of *Isis Unveiled*. The colonel was outraged by this calumny. After all, the baron had possessed neither "literary talent, erudition, nor scholastic tastes." Even worse, he turned out to have been a convicted fraudster. The idea that such a man could have composed the founding text of Theosophy was clearly absurd. All in all, Colonel Olcott rued the day he ever crossed paths with Baron De Palm. Nevertheless, he was a man of his word. He had promised the baron a cremation, and a cremation he would have.

An opportunity to be rid of the baron finally arose when the colonel read in his morning paper that an eccentric Pennsylvania physician, Dr. Francis LeMoyne, had ordered the construction of a private crematorium for the disposal of his own remains. Olcott immediately wrote to Dr. LeMoyne asking if he might bring Baron De Palm to be incinerated in the new facility. The doctor gladly consented. And so, on December 6, 1876, the baron was finally consigned to the flames.

The colonel had, of course, ensured that the press was in attendance. Indeed, considering that the baron's body was the first to be cremated in the United States, it would have been hard to keep them away. Unfortunately, the sight of the baron's mummified remains proved rather too much for the pressmen to stomach. "No spectacle more horrible was ever shown to mortal eyes," wrote one. Another lamented that "for all the ceremony that was observed, one might have supposed that the company had been assembled to have a good time over a roast pig."

Nevertheless, the incineration itself went without a hitch. Colonel Olcott was delighted to observe "how clean and esthetical this mode of sepulture is in contrast with that of burial." Afterwards, the Colonel and Dr. LeMoyne made their way to the town hall to address a public meeting on the subject of cremation. Then the colonel returned to New York carrying the baron's ashes with him in a "Hindu urn." He later scattered them



Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne
(1798-1879).



The LeMoyne Crematory, in North Franklin Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania was the first to be built in the United States for Francis Julius LeMoyne in 1876.



The memorial for Colonel Olcott in Adyar, South Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

in the harbor "with an appropriate, yet simple, ceremonial," as he described it.

"And thus it came about that the Theosophical Society not only introduced Hindu philosophical ideas into the United States, but also the Hindu mode of sepulture," wrote the colonel with

obvious satisfaction. Naturally, he hoped that when the time came, his own body would

also be "reduced to harmless ashes" so as not to "become a peril to the living."

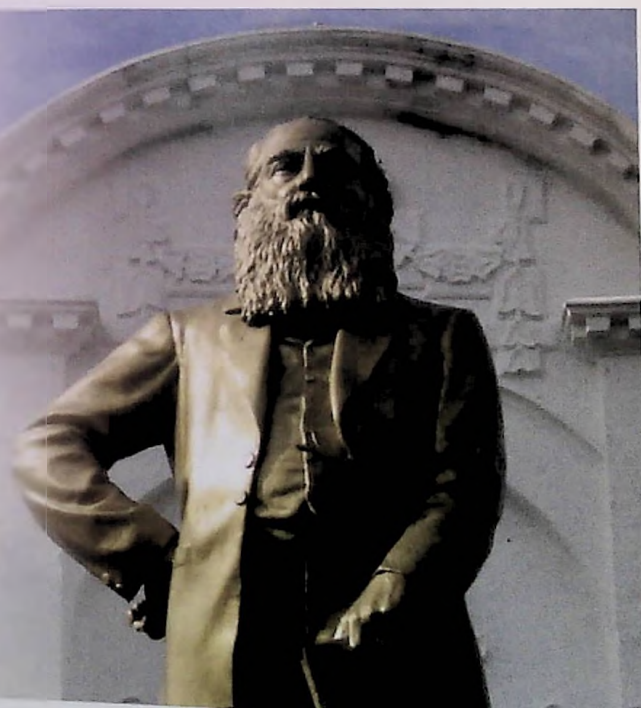
Colonel Olcott lived for a further three decades, finally passing away in India in 1907. A simple stone monument marks the spot in Adyar, India, where he was cremated.

The inscription reads: "Henry Steel Olcott, Colonel of the U. S. A. Army, president, founder of the Theosophical Society. On the spot his body was given back to the elements by fire, February 17, 1907. May he soon return."

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"What the Society has hitherto done - its great merit in the eyes of some, and its terrible fault in the estimation of others - is to make people think. No one can for long belong to the Theosophical Society without beginning to question himself. The very air of Theosophy is charged with the spirit of enquiry. It is not the 'sceptical' spirit, nor is it the 'agnostic'. It is a real desire to know and learn the truth, as far as it is possible for any creature to know it who is so limited by his capacities and so biased by his prejudices as is man."

Colonel Henry Steel Olcott



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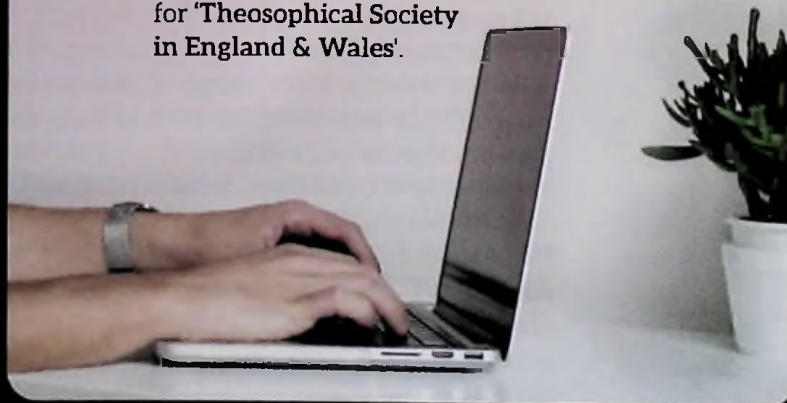
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Heaven and Hell

By **Bhavani Shankar**

"The gates of hell are three – desire, anger, covetousness, which destroy the Soul; wherefore one should abandon them."

Bhagavad-Gita, XVI. 21.

The ancients knew what we moderns are beginning to believe, that heaven and hell, Svarga and Naraka, are in ourselves. Religions have distorted the old truth and have made heaven and hell distant localities, instead of states of human consciousness, which they are. The Soul's imprisonment and its deliverance do not depend upon movements in material space, but upon motions in spiritual space i.e. on elevating or lowering the ideation inherent in our own consciousness.

When a man is in the slough of jealousy or despondency he is in hell; when his thoughts soar to visualise selflessness and compassion he is in heaven. The great Buddha reiterated the fact that this earth is the lowest of hells that our humanity touches. After-death conditions for most men who die natural deaths are pleasanter than are experiences in embodied life. We suffer here, and dying naturally enjoy the reward of virtues



Above: *Man Having to Choose between the Virtues and Vices* by Frans Francken the Younger, 1635.

practised, and are compensated for suffering according to the merit of each. It is the intuitive perception of this truth on the part of mankind which is responsible for the belief that death makes all men holy and pure. Death does not transform a sinner into a saint; but deprived of the possibility of committing fresh sins, he gets his due from the compassionate law of Karma, in such rest as he has himself merited.



These reflections will lead the student to perceive that each one is here and now in heaven or hell, according to the state of his thought-feelings. Our moods which come and go are but visible expressions of the inner states of our thought-feelings. In the same city dwell demoniacal beings and Divine Mahatmas; in the same village are to be found the idle and the industrious; in the same family one is selfish and another thoughtful of all; nay, in the same breast surge the cruelty that destroys and the courage that

succours. It is true that *"each man his prison makes."*

After death the state of the Soul is a continuation of its state as an incarnate being.

And yet each one of us should literally dread the hell-fire; most are ignorant that they are very near to it, and many burning in that pit are unaware of that fact.

The impure and wicked will not go to hell, they are in it. That is why they do not know the nature of action nor of cessation from action. The untruthful man is in hell already and his punishment begins the moment he is found out, and even before! Those who deny the existence of Soul or the Spiritual nature of this universe are in a hell of their own; and some such who are dependent on their corpus of flesh and blood and nothing higher and who advocate and practise sense and sex *"enjoyment,"* die in hell, to be reborn here in hell again – *"with natures perverted, enemies of the world they are born to destroy."*

This sounds gruesome, because the idea is presented with some directness. Ponder over it in the light of the teachings of the Gita and its accuracy will not be denied.

There arise the practical questions – how to get out of the hell in which one may find oneself, and also what would keep a man from falling over the precipice into a fresh hell?

Krishna definitely states that there are three gates which lead us into hell: Kama – Passion, Krodha – Anger and Lobha – Greed. If we learn how to avoid these three we have turned our face heavenward. All mortals are afflicted, in small measure or great, with these three; without exception for any and



every one these cause pain and suffering, in due course. We name pain and suffering as hell – they are not, for they are at once punitive and purgative. We are not in hell when we suffer from our lust and anger and avarice; we have passed out of hell into purgatory. We are in hell when we are lustful and angry and greedy. Hell's one characteristic is its power to cause forgetfulness, loss of memory, and the man in hell knows not that he is there. He is stunned by the blow which his own lust and anger and greed have given him; when he comes to life, that is, remembers his crime, he is out of hell.

Memory, then, plays a very important role. If we can always remember; if we do not lose our power to recollect; if every time we near the cause of passion-power-pelf we collect ourselves and exclaim "Get thee behind me," then in that process we purge ourselves and are ready to experience something heavenly.

Our deeds flow from our thoughts and feelings; the strength of will manifests according to the power of our thoughts and feelings; our motive is the hidden spring of our ideas and emotions.

Therefore, we must begin there – we must question the motive of every thought-feeling, every word, every deed. Selfishness of motive is the outcome of dwelling on petty, mean, low, commonplace thoughts.

Such increase egotism and selfishness. As we dwell on great and noble thoughts, impersonal feelings, universal ideas, a new force

energises us, and this purifies our motives, gives them a new tone, a new direction. This leads to an inner conversion, and our outer life expresses the change for the better. Thus a man leaves hell behind, and entering heaven makes of earth a new place – no more a wilderness but a veritable Garden of Eden. ❖

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Bhavani Shankar (1859-1936) was one of the most prominent of the last surviving Indian chelas (disciples) of the Masters from H. P. Blavatsky's Adyar days. He is spoken of in glowing terms by the Masters in their Letters and elsewhere and was a chela of the Master K.H.

Rui Silvestre



**"We taught
you,
young man,
because
you already
knew."**

Master Kan,
Kung Fu series
1970s.

Cosmogenesis in a Nutshell

By *Julie Faber*

Stanza 1

T'was the night before dawn-break,
When no-thing had stirred,
No trees and no planets
No people, no bird

For there wasn't a cosmos,
No galaxy, no Earth,
No Big-Bang had started,
Nor the cause of its birth.
Throughout Space was silence,
There wasn't a sound,
No ear-drums upon which
A noise could be heard.
All was in darkness,
The temperature cold,
No new Manvantara,
No new story told.
Yet Space wasn't empty,
But full with no brim,
Awaiting a new birth,
And fresh life within.
We cannot imagine
An emptiness full,
The latency everywhere,
Awaiting the call.
But where did potential
Of all the Life hide?

And what's the container
That holds all inside?

Stanza 2

In Stanza 1, no-thing had stirred,
No-thing had begun
Nothing was heard.
Yet in Stanza 2
A change has occurred,
The merest of flutterings,
Like the wings of a bird.
Still no-thing was conscious,
But, as in a dream,
Ideas started forming,
A process began.
But who was the dreamer?
In whose mind was found,
The Great Divine Plan,
For a new cosmic Round?

Stanza 3

Wake up! Wake up!
For, now is the time,
The message is subtle
Yet cosmically sublime.
The dawn has arisen,
To start a new day,
The sun must now rise,
And send out a ray.
The planning is over,
It's time to begin,
Call on our friend Fohat,
And tell it to spin!

Stanza 4

This Stanza in my mind
For me 'drops the penny'

Of how all can go from
 The One to the Many.
 Absolute zero,
 From where it all starts,
 The Absolute hero,
 Whose ray it imparts.
 The Ray is number 1.
 The cause of number 2.
 The parents, Father-Mother,
 Give the obvious clue.
 And the resulting 'child',
 Just like you or me,
 Then makes the relationship.
 The grand number 3.
 The Elements or building blocks,
 Denoted by number 4,
 Must then be provided,
 And kept safely in store.
 The space and the equipment.
 Now safely stored in heaven,
 Require top-notch Builders.
 Hence, we get to number 7.
 But these Bosses need an army,
 Of which they're at the helm,
 To build the whole of Nature,
 And populate the realms.
 How it's done is hidden,
 In the sacred symbol Pi.
 The circle, radius, circumference.
 The explanation why.
 Twelve Sacred Animals surround,
 The heavens and the Earth,
 Twelve zodiacal symbols,
 Under whose influence we're birthed.
 Cosmic matter is now formed,
 And so, it starts to fly,
 It continues on its journey,
 To populate the sky.

Thus, the One becomes the Many,
 I hope that much is clear,
 More's to come in Stanza 5,
 Let's continue reading there.

Stanza 5

Left, right, up and down,
 Gave cause for me to frown,
 How can there be above, below,
 In the boundless universe we know?
 Where's Heaven, or Hell,
 Once day becomes night?
 For everything is spinning,
 This really can't be right.
 Yet allegorical depiction,
 Makes all of this much clearer,
 Because this type of fiction,
 Brings some understanding nearer.
 So, the lesson to be taken,
 From this 'ere Stanza 5.
 Is there be worlds within worlds.
 That brings it all to life.
 There's a bigger world, with Guardians,
 To ensure all stays in place.
 And nothing strays,
 Beyond a Ring-Pass-Not,
 T'il completion of the very last Race.
 It's so hard to imagine.
 It makes me want to cuss!
 Yet, with certainty, we must go on,
 T'il the Great Day Be With Us.

Stanza 6

And now at last, we have reached
 The 4th Round of our Chain,
 A monumental cycle,
 Is about to start again.

Humanity will reach the stage.
 Of being given Mind.
 But also, selfishness and rage,
 So many wars we find.
 Fohat has been hard at work,
 Our planet is now ready,
 The Laya Centres keep all safe,
 The Guardians keep Earth steady.
 The Ring-Pass-Not is held in place,
 Nothing may go beyond it.
 And all must learn their role in Space,
 And Time, on this great planet.
 Of Elements, there are seven,
 Of which we know but four,
 The three others to be revealed,
 Later Rounds unlock their door.
 Old wheels inform the new ones.
 Time, Nature does not waste.
 For it is on the previous wheels,
 That the current wheels are based.
 Every act and thought recorded,
 By Lipikas, every war,
 Every Earth-time experience,
 Is held safely in store.
 For nothing is forgotten.
 And all must be addressed,
 During a Manvantara,
 Before the time of rest.
 We can't start to imagine,
 The huge timescales involved,
 As smaller wheels within bigger wheels,
 Take eons to evolve.
 But ever marching onwards.
 On Earth and too in heaven.
 As we shall see quite shortly.
 When we conclude with Stanza 7.

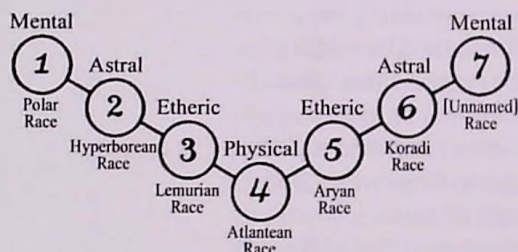
Stanza 7

We're here because we have to be,
 We never had a choice,
 There's nowhere else for us to be,
 No point to raise your voice.
 We're part of Evolution,
 Whether liking it or not,
 Don't fight in revolution,
 You get what you have got.
 Everything is how it's meant to be,
 You may well dream of better,
 A great spiritual aspiration.
 But Karma is your fetter.
 Just TRY to be the best you can,
 No one can ask you more,
 Be kind, compassionate and altruistic,
 Until the closing of this door.
 And should you feel that you have failed,
 And count mistakes you've made,
 It simply means you're human,
 It's OK to feel afraid.
 But know this O' Disciple.
 Fear really isn't true.
 If you do the very best you can,
 It's better to be you.
 This lifetime's not the only one.
 You'll have so many more,
 Each helps to move you forward,
 Of Perfection, please be sure.
 So, TRY to be more patient,
 And smile at restraint,
 The gods are understanding.
 You are not yet a great saint!
 Keep TRYING - it's all progress.
 At times struggle or uphill,
 Until 'Great Day Be With Us'
 When the whole universe will thrill. ✚

which transports them to the new world/ plane (Both seed gatherer and seed sower.) In the Wisdom teaching these angels are referred to as "Root Manus" when a cycle is beginning and as "Seed Manus" when a cycle comes to its close. The manus of our 'Life-wave' are sometimes known as "The Angel of Humanity" or "The Planetary Angel".

The Earthly Noah represents this same process at a much later stage (a tiny period of earth history, as the impetus of the human life-wave passed from one root-race to the next, during the dark days of the war and subsequent flood in Atlantis). Noah is the

"Reaper of Souls" and the "Sower of Seeds". He is the Manu of the fifth great race (ours). He is Saturn, Cronos - Father Time, The Grim reaper, Capricorn - the darkest of days and the birth of new light. Noah



The Seven Rounds and the Seven Root-Races as presented HP Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*.

is an angel with many names and numerous expressions in the cosmic scheme.

In this course we'll discover the true nature of angels and their involvement with the evolution of humanity. We will learn about the relationship between angels and humans both in the cosmos and within man himself. We will see angels playing their vital part in the creation of worlds and in the seeding and harvesting of life throughout the great and minor cycles. Seasons will unfold into years, decades into life times, continents

will come and go, races born and decay, planets and solar systems cycle through their minor eternities, universes sink into blackness, and cosmic infinity shrink to non-being and then rise again as angels breathe life and ring out the music of the spheres.

Come Gabriel blow your horn, as the heavenly choirs come forth with voice and harp, and worlds without number spring into being. ✨



Eric McGough is a writer and author with four published novels in print. He has also written and produced several, widely acclaimed audio courses on Theosophy. He was President of the English Section of the

Theosophical Society from 2008 to 2014. For the last fourteen years, he has run the English Theosophical Society's Diploma in Theosophy Course, which is subscribed to by students from across the world.

Session one - introduction of the study course, *All About Angels*. By Eric McGough
www.ericmcgough.com

Leo Tolstoy

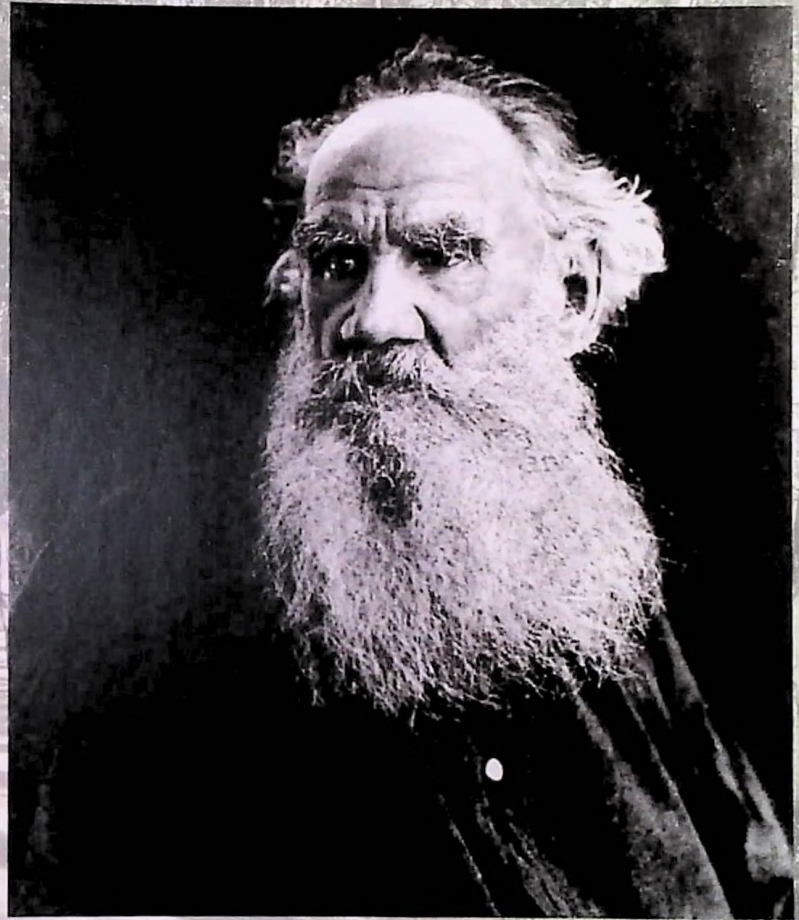
"Freethinkers are those who are willing to use their minds without prejudice and without fearing to understand things that clash with their own customs, privileges, or beliefs. This state of mind is not common, but it is essential for right thinking."

Leo Tolstoy

In 1908, Tolstoy wrote *A Letter to a Hindu* outlining his belief in non-violence as a means for India to gain independence from colonial rule. In 1909, Gandhi read a copy of the letter when he was becoming an activist in South Africa. He wrote to Tolstoy seeking proof that he was the author, which led to further correspondence.

Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* also helped to convince Gandhi of non-violent resistance, a debt Gandhi acknowledged in his autobiography, calling Tolstoy "the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced".

Although their correspondence lasted only a year, from October 1909 until Tolstoy's death in November 1910, it led Gandhi to give the name Tolstoy Colony to his second ashram in



Above: Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, also known as Leo Tolstoy, was born on 9 September 1828, at Yasnaya Polyana, Russia. He died on 20 November 1910, at Lev Tolstoy, Russia. Background: An avenue of birch trees leads from the gate at Yasnaya Polyana to Tolstoy's house.

South Africa. Both men also believed in the merits of vegetarianism, the subject of several of Tolstoy's essays. ✱

Last Words

Desiderata

By Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. ✱

By Max Ehrmann ©1927

About The Theosophical Society

Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

1. To form a nucleus of universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

The Theosophical Society is a worldwide community whose primary Object is the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction, based on the realisation that life and all its diverse forms, human and non-human, is indivisibly One.

Founded in 1875, the Society draws together those of goodwill whatever their religious affiliation (if any), social status, gender or ethnicity. The Society promotes such understanding through the study and practical application of the Ageless Wisdom of Theosophy.

The International Mission Statement of the Society is: *'To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.'*

Unity lies at the very heart of the Theosophical community and inspires the heart of its members towards unselfish service and inner transformation. Divine Wisdom is clear – the paths towards it are many.

The word 'Theosophy' is from Greek origin meaning Wisdom of the Gods (theo – of Gods; Sophia – wisdom). It is a word which has been used for many centuries and is also known as the Ageless Wisdom.

The Society imposes no beliefs on its members, who are united by a common search for Truth and a desire to learn the meaning and purpose of existence through study, reflection, self-responsibility and self-less service.

It jealously guards and promotes freedom of thought and no member may impose their views on any other.

Esoterica is available both in printed form and online. Please let us know if you have friends or family members who would like to receive the printed version, free of charge, by filling out the form below and posting to 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA, or by contacting office@theosoc.org.uk. A downloadable version, also free of charge, is available on our website homepage www.theosoc.org.uk

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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Esoterica, the journal of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales,
is a magazine for the inquiring and the curious.
It is for those seeking spiritual answers to those big questions of life:

Who are we?

Where did we come from?

What's our purpose and destiny in life?

Its mission is to explore those timeless truths, occult knowledge and universal laws
which pre-date but underpin all philosophy, science and religion.

We offer thought-provoking and original interpretations
of these fascinating ideas from the perennial philosophy
to unlock the secrets of ourselves and the cosmos.

Above all, it's our intention to offer not just dry theory but, wherever possible,
practical solutions to the difficult issues which face every one of us.

The next edition will appear on the winter solstice,
21st December 2024.

